

A SHORT REVIEW ON THE EVOLUTION OF BENGALI PODABALI KIRTAN IN POST CHAITANYA ERA

Dr. Dola Roy

B.Sc. MA, (B.ed), Ph.D., Asst. Teacher at "Kamala Girls' School (Government Sponsored)" West Bengal.

Abstract

Kirtan is Bengal's very own asset. Before the Bhakti movement and Post era of Chaitanyadeva, Kirtan was limited between the barriers of "NaamKirtan" or "Sangkirtan". To popularize "Kirtan" Sri Chaitanyadev gave it a new aesthetic dimensional form and inculcated a new format of Kirtan. Kirtan achieved a new shape, dimension, and scope during the Chaitanya era. It is observed that, after Post Chaitanya Era, there were many Styles or Gharana of Kirtan under the influence of the "Vaishnav" "Padakartas" (Writers of Kirtan Pada). After the formation of Gharana, Kirtan gave up its many original components, Taal, Chanda, Bhab, and intermingled with different urban songs as a result we get the "Kirtananga" Songs of Kabi Guru Rabindranath Thakur, Rajanikanto, Atul Prasad Sen, and Kazi Nazrul Islam.

Keywords: Kirtan, Chaitanyadev, Rural songs, Gharana of Kirtan, Pada, Padakorta

Introduction

To know about the significance of "Podabali Kirtan" in the Post Chaitanya Era, first, we have to know about the term "Kirtan". 'Kirtan' is a Sanskrit word and if we examine we can find that, the root word of 'Kirtan' is 'Kirta' which means to praise, to describe someone's quality. The word 'Kirtan' is used to describe the quality of a Person, King, god - goddess, etc. This description may be in the form of prose or poetry. But in ancient times, Praising was described through a particular form of Poetry, known as 'Pada'. In the middle age, the "Vaishnav Pada Kartas" or writer/composers of "Kirtan Pada" wrote their own 'Pada' and composed its melodies themselves so these 'Padas' were called 'Padagaan'. Those days the form of 'Kirtan' was not like the present days. Because at that time there was no definite form of Kirtan. We know only about composition or 'Prabandha'. There was a sublimed mediate Position between Folk songs and classical songs and is known as "Prakirna Gaan". If we analyze the tune of 'Kirtan' we can see that, from the "Prakirna Gaan" the style 'Kirtan' was evolved. The "Pada Gaan" of "Vaishnav Padas" writer or "Pada Karta" were Popularized in Pre Chaitanya Period which was categorized in two significant manners, one is very Sophisticated 'Kirtan' Class and another is "Regional Urban Songs". During the "Bhakti Movement" (15th - 16th Century) The Vaishnavas depicted 'Kirtan' as

devotional Songs and is Popularly known as 'Vishnupada' in Matura – Vrindaban of North East India, 'Kirtan' in East, 'Kirtanam' in South India and 'Bhajan' in West India. During Chaitanyadev, "Hari Sankirtan" was very Popular which we get to know this from the compositions of Vrindaban Dasa. Dance in divine ecstasy was one of the pivotal components in "Hari Sankirtan". "Naam Kirtan" or "Sang kirtan" was popularized during the Chaitanya era. After Chaitanyadeva, 'Kirtan' became Popular by the "Vaishnavas" clangs, especially by Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur. Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur was the Pioneer of the new form and reformation of 'Kirtan' naming it as "Padabali Kirtan" or "Rasa kirtan".

This form of 'Kirtan' is the classical form and aesthetic, and this study centers around this particular topic. During the time of Sri Chaitanyadeva, there was no definite form of Kirtan except "Padabali Kirtan" or "Rasa kirtan" whereas in the Post Chaitanya era the "Padabali Kirtan" got a different recognition in Indian music due to the significant development made by Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur.

Thus, this research article depicts whether Bengali "Padabali Kirtan" lost its dignity or mingled with rural songs.

Literature Review

Previous researchers though have given enormous efforts on all the different fields of 'Kirtan' but the areas which were not mentioned by them has been given the best effort to be depicted and brought into light through this research paper by comprehending and analyzing whether Bengali "Padabali Kirtan" lost its dignity or mingled with rural songs.

As per the author Khagendranath Mitra in his book "Kirtan" (1945) he explained the Significance of Kirtan Raag – Raagini, the great "Kheturi" festival, and the "Gharanas of Kirtan".

On reading the book of Swami Pragyanananda's "Padabali Kirtan" er Itihas' we can understand the history of "Padabali Kirtan", the detailed Philosophy of 'Kirtan', "Pala Kirtan" and the Raga, Tala, and Alankar of 'Kirtan'.

Reading the book of Dr. Harekrishna Mukhopadhey's "Banglar Kirton O Kirtoniya" (1971) I can comprehend that the book is emphasized on "Pada Kirtan" of Pre Chaitanya era, "Naam Sangkirtan", "Lila kirtan", the "Kirtaniya of nabadeep's and Kirtaniya of Sri Puridham".

As per the author of "Bangla Kirtoner itihas", Sri Hritesh Ranjan Sanyal (1989) has described the social significance of Kirtan.

Sir Kali Mohan Vidya Ratna's "kirtan Padaboli" propounded the different "Padakortas". As per researcher and scholar, Dr. Pradip Kumar Ghosh in his book "Bangla Kirtoner songkhipta Itihas" (2005) Propounded the source and evolution of Bengali 'Kirtan'.

Reading the book "Banglar Kirtan gaan" of Mriganka Shekar Chakraborty (1995) I came to know about the description of 'Kirtan' 'Gharna' and the 'Taalas' of 'Kirtan'. But

in his book the researcher did not mention anything about the significance of 'Taalas' and the position of 'Kirtan' in the Post Chaitanya Era.

Materials and Method

Reading the book of P.C. Tripathi's Research Methodology (2007) is made significant detailing of the process of research methodology. He had propounded the expedite methods of data collection, techniques of data collection, data processing, hypothesis testing, interpretation and report writing, and Bibliography.

As per researcher Dr. Surabhi Bandopadhyay (2005) she emphasized the details of methodology in the book which has a significant impact on selecting the research methodology adopted in this study.

For finding the appropriate facts and conducting the research I have adopted the following steps: -

There has been a detailed literature review (Based on Secondary data) on the fundamentals of 'Kirtan' considering the Pre and Post Chaitanya era.

For this research different Papers, documents, subjective to 'Kirtan' and 'Kirtan' related experiments have been considered which are collected from various Govt. and non – Govt. libraries.

In this research, a comparative study between the Pre and the Post Chaitanya era related to the fundamental of 'Kirtan' has been considered and analyzed by the researcher.

Additionally, CDS-recommended cassettes, video footage, maps have also been widely used and considered for the study.

As we know no research can be universal in nature similarly this paper also has certain limitations such as time limitation, the limited number of books, documented information that were available in form of secondary data are some of the limits of this study.

Discussion

'Kirtan' is a Sanskrit word, that originated from the root word 'Kirta'. It means to describe, to Praise, etc. The "Vaishnav Padakarta" in the middle age wrote their composition and it is known as 'Padagaan'. In middle age, there is no definite form of 'Kirtan' in comparison with the present day. During that time there were compositions or Prabandha. The Bengali 'Kirtan' is derived from "Prokirno Gaan". So the experts of 'Kirtan' can't detect the source of 'Kirtan'.

If we want to know about the "Padaboli Kirtan" of the Post Chaitanya era we have to know the Pre Chaitanya era of 'Kirtan'. The main source of Kirtan came to form Charjya Pada and then it was percolated down by 'Geetgovinda' of Vahisnav laureate Joydeva, Sri Krishna kirtan of Baru Chandidas.

To date, we are unable to track any proper history of the evolution of 'Kirtan'. If we want to find the source of 'Kirtan', it came from the "Geetagovinda" of Joydeva. So we can say that the "Geetagovinda" is the Pioneer work of "Podaboli Kirtan". We can see Similarities between the 'Padagaan' of "Geetagovinda" and "Podaboli kirtan". The writers of "Podaboli kirtan" wrote many 'Pada' by the influence of "Geetagovinda".

Then we get to the 'Pada' of "Sri Krishna kirtan" of Baru candidates. This is a Bengali lyrical – drama and it is written in the 15th Century in the form of 'Pala'. The 'Pada' under the Shelter of 'Pala' (Short Play) proves that the history of 'Palagaan' (Short Play) is very ancient. So we can say that the "Padabali Kirtan" of the Pre and Post Chaitanya era was evolved through the evolution of the tradition of "Geetagovinda" and "Sri Krishna kirtan".

Now, we come to the Chaitanya era. If we try to search the 'kirtan' in Bangladesh we will find the "Padaboli Kirtan" was Popularised by the Promotion of religion. Kirtan was not created by Sri Chaitanya but was popularized by him. He used the Kirtan as a medium of the "Bhakti Movement". During the period of Sri Chaitanyadeva (15th century), "Naam Kirtan", "Sang kirtan" and "Nagor kirtan" were populated. He was the founder of "Sang kirtan" also known as "Naam Sang Kirtan" as the primary tool for the "Bhakti Movement". The Main Characteristics of the 'Kirtan' Popularised by Sri Chaitanyadeva were its simplicity and deepness. During the 16th century, 'The Kirtaniya' of Bengal was divided into two categories (1) "Puridham Kirtaniya" (2) "Kirtaniya of Bengal".

The tune, Tala, Pada, etc. are used in 'Kirtan' was in a relaxed format this is because of its regional musical influence so we can say that to reform the structure of 'Kirtan' there was an immense contribution of Sri Chaitanyadev and the Pilgrimages from all over India was filled with devotion and ecstasy of this Kirtan.

In post-Chaitanya era i.e. in the 2nd half of 16th Century, a new format came in through the evolution of 'Kirtan' by Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur. Through his efforts, Kirtan was popularized and promoted everywhere in Bengal. He was born after Chaitanyadev and was the first person who promote the classical 'Kirtan' in the Kheturi festival of Rajsahi District. The main reason behind this festival is to gather all 'Vaishnavas' and by this Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur was able to promote the theory of 'Vaishnavism', during that period North Bengal was the influence of Shivasim. To diminish the power of Shaiva influences and to establish the power of Vaishnavism, Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur organized the Kheturi festival. In this festival, Sri Chaitanyadev Mahaprabhu and Sri Krishna were worshiped and Chaitanya Bhagabat composed by Vrindaban Das was recited.

The main characteristic of the Khetri Utsav is to introduce the demonstration of the new format or style of "Padabali Kirtan". The method that was fixed here was to represent the Kirtan Aalap (Nibodhho) without Taal. During this time the garlanding ceremony was introduced and this ceremony was started by Raghunanodo of Sri Khanda. Then they started the presenting of the main "Padaboli Kirtan". The 'Padas'

(Lyrical Part) that were Promoted in this festival described Sri Gouranga Dev i.e. about Radha Krishna. We can say that the new format in "Padaboli Kirtan" was the introduction of the phase "Gourchandrika". In this type of Kirtan (introduced by Narotham Thakur), there was a role of instrumentation and it was first turned on by Narottam Thakur.

Through this festival, Sri Narottam Dutta Thakur has started a new style in "Padaboli Kirtan", i.e. "Garanhati Style or Gharana". By this, 'Kirtan' was established in an immense high position, and through this Gharana, we were able to get other styles of "Padabali Kirtan", i.e. "Monohorsahi Gharana", "Reneti Gharana", "Mondarini Gharana" and "Jharkhandi Gharana".

From the 18th Century onwards these Gharanas were starting to abolish causing regionalism. During this period the influence of folk culture was mixed with "Padabali Kirtan" Gharanas and fused with many more urban songs. So we can observe the influence of 'kirtan' (During the 18th – 20th century) on urban songs like "Shyama Sangeet", "Tappa", "Kabi Gaan", "Dhop Kirtan", "Rabindra Sangeet", "Nazural Geeti" etc. The influence was observed from the view of Tune, Taal, Characteristic of lyrical Part, 'Vhaab' and the style of singing.

Conclusion: It is infeasible to describe and depict such a big area of the evolution of "Padabali Kirtan" in a short way. Starting from 'Charjyapada' this tradition was flowing down through 'Geetgovindo', 'Sri Krishna kirtan' of Baruchardidas, Sri Chaitoryadev's "Naam kirtan" or "Song kirtan" and the classical format of "Narottam Dutta Thakur". In the post-Chaitanya era, i.e. after 16th century till the 18th century the "Padabali Kirtan" was merged with the urban songs by the demolition of Gharana of 'Kirtan'. So in the Present era, we can't get the main format of "Padabali Kirtan" but the components are mixed with different Bengali songs and as a result of this the Bengali folk songs are highly influenced by "Padabali Kirtan".

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